1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

this food is given as charity to the older women of the group who have no husbands. Both of these acts, the giving of the food and the sending out of the kola nuts, are said to be the formal announcement of the new baby's birth as well as an invitation to attend the naming ceremony held on the eighth day after birth, that is to say on the same day one week later.

It is worth noting at this point that these precautions are well adapted to the facts of Kanuri life. Infant mortality is extremely common, varying for example between 122 and 240 per thousand in the urban areas where the hospitals have been keeping records. This is especially true of the first few hours and days after birth. One man in Magumeri had only two children alive out of nine born to him and his one wife, and five of these nine had died within the first eight days of life. Although this case is somewhat exceptional, it is not difficult to hear of comparable reports throughout the emirate. The Kanuri see many of these deaths as being the result of someone's or something's (a spirit, for instance) malevolent intentions. Charms and prayers are used and divination by religious leaders is sometimes resorted to because of the insecurity the parents feel over the survival of their newborn infant. Thus the eight-day period before the naming ceremony is a cultural buffer, a cushion that allows for the disappointment and grief associated with the highly possible death of the infant.

The Naming

Early in the morning of the eighth day the formal naming ceremony is performed. As they do for all public gatherings, men and women go separately; the women, in groups formed into single files according to rank, move past the men who are seated on the ground near the entrance to the compound. The ground millet flour and other foods received at this time as gifts allow the wife to prepare her husband's food during her confinement without engaging in a most arduous part of her work—that of grinding the millet into flour. Inside the compound the women sit in front of the mother's hut chatting gaily and coloring their teeth with tobacco flowers and a local plant used specifically for this purpose. The barber and his young assistant or apprentice arrive and cut facemarks on the new-born infant and then remove its uvula. While waiting to carry out this ritual function, the barber and his assistants cut the women's hair free of charge as a mark of the festiveness of the occasion. The women collect some money for the barber which is given to him after the baby has been successfully incised. The ceremony ends when perfume is passed among the women and all assembled dip their fingers in tiny bottles or a glass, then rub the scent over their neck and hands. Many, however, stay on talking and chatting for several hours before drifting back in small groups to their own compounds.

In front of the compound the men sit on mats. On one side of the gate sit the *mallams* (religious practitioners) reading from the Koran. On the other side of the infant's hut are the men of the household sitting in order of seniority with the most senior closest to the door. Next to them are their close friends, relatives, and the highest ranking people in attendance. The rest spread out along the north side of the compound under its front wall and everyone waits for the name to be an-

[GEIDAM]

Table XIb

Cases of Children Given Away

Aristocracy	2:	to FaYoBr after weaning to FaElSi after weaning	597 565
Koranic Malams	1:	to MoMo after weaning	554
Canteen Traders	1:	to cousin after weaning	463
NA Malams	1:	to FaElBr (chibuna) after weaning	
Kabuna	-		
Craftsmen	1:	to neighbor (chibuna) after weaning	
Talaka	1:	to FaMo at age 4	
Low-status	1:	to chibuna at age 11	
	8		

median number of children= .75

mean number of children=1.33

nuri men in this sample have 57 living children. One hundred and eight children had been born to the group, but 51 of these have died. Because of the exceptionally high infant mortality rate, children are greatly desired and prized. In addition to malaria, which is the greatest killer of infants, an extremely high rate of venereal disease is present in Bornu, and a high percentage of those infected are sterile and unable to bear children. One factor in spreading venereal disease is the high divorce rate. Frequent divorce and remarriage spreads the disease throughout the population, and results in many sterile individuals who desperately want children. In their desire for children, they divorce and remarry, thus spreading the disease still further. In particular, if they marry a zogor they are

163 163 165 [842] [164] 164 586 [842]

882 at least one non-agricultural occupation, even if it is just the marketing of agricultural commodities as is the case with surplus producers.

882 885 562 In summary then, adolescence (in the limited sense referred to above) sharply divides male and female roles. The female has taken on her role as a married woman and it is within this status that she completes the learning of skills necessary for her adult role in society. Her status attributes may shift and change during her mature life. She may become single again (most women do), remarry, and bear children, but the framework of her adulthood is entered into at first virilocal marriage, at or before puberty. For the boy, adolescence is socially entered into at his circumcision and congeals psychologically after physiological puberty. He utilizes this period to learn the multitude of interpersonal and occupational skills which he requires as an adult, and a potential family head.

582 [561] [165] [162] One of the interesting functional results of having an extra age status for males only is its artificial increase in the availability of women for marriage. If we consider for the sake of argument that the Kanuri life span is sixty years and the ratio of men to women is roughly one to one,(1) then with women marrying roughly around the age of ten to twelve and men marrying roughly around the age of twenty to twenty-two, women are marriageable for approximately fifty and men for forty years respectively. In other words, women would be of marriageable status one-fifth longer in time relative to men.(2)

(1) Bornu Census: 1951. Males: 790, 361. Females: 805, 347.
(2) If the life span is put at a smaller figure, as it probably ought to be to correspond with the facts, then this ratio would be larger because the length of adolescence is a constant.